

THE DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

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First All-female Crew Flies Combat Mission



USAF PHOTO

From left to right, Staff Sgt. Josie E. Harshe, flight engineer; Capt. Anita T. Mack, navigator; 1st Lt. Siobhan Couturier, pilot; Capt. Carol J. Mitchell, aircraft commander; and loadmasters Tech. Sgt. Sigrid M. Carrero-Perez and Senior Airman Ci Ci Alonzo, pause in the cargo bay of their C-130 for a group photo following their historic flight. U.S. Air Force photo

By U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael G. Johnson
386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA, Sept. 27, 2005, - A crew of six Airmen, at a forward deployed location, climbed aboard a C-130 Hercules recently for the first time in their careers. But something distinguished this mission from others they had flown --it was the first time an all-female C-130 crew flew a combat mission.

Capt. Carol Mitchell, aircraft commander; 1st Lt. Siobhan Couturier, pilot; Capt. Anita T. Mack, navigator; Staff Sgt. Josie E. Harshe, flight engineer; and loadmasters Tech. Sgt. Sigrid M. Carrero-Perez and Senior Airman Ci Ci Alonzo are all permanently assigned to the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and currently are deployed to the 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron flying cargo and troops in and out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

While some would call their mission "historic," they feel this mission should be recognized like every other flight -- a successful combat mission.

"I enjoyed flying with this crew, but I don't think we should go out of our way to have all-female crews," said Captain Mitchell. "It took a long time for women to become accepted as aircrew members, and now that we are, we would be taking a step back by singling ourselves out rather than blending in with the rest of the Air Force."

Airman Alonzo agrees. "It was a great experience not many females can say they've had," she said. However I don't believe the Air Force should seek out all-female crews -- instead, we should focus on experience.

"(The Air Force) should have the best crews they can put together. Nothing other than qualification and ability should be considered," said Captain Mack.

Not only did this all female crew fly together for the first time, 6,800 miles from home-station, but also they flew the mission on a Vietnam-era airplane -- significance the crew did not miss. "Our (aircraft) was a 1962 model. (It) came off the line when women weren't accepted as C-130 aircrew, let alone in combat," said Sergeant Harshe.

After the excitement of this all-female C-130 crew flying the first combat mission together wore off, they focused on what really mattered.

"(What matters is) knowing we're making a difference and seeing it with every mission we fly," said Airman Alonzo. "(It's also) moving troops into the theater where they're needed, seeing the excitement and relief on the faces of the guys and gals we take out of theater who have been there for six months to a year and are on their way home to their loved ones."

During the mission, the crew transported 151 Marines and their equipment.

Another thing they all agreed upon, the mission was a true experience.

"It was a fun thing to be able to say you did, if only once. Not that it is better, this was just different, and probably won't happen for us again anytime soon just because of the sheer numbers," said Sergeant Harshe.

Captain Mitchell said one additional benefit of this all female flight was gaining a different perspective.

"One way to avoid (complacency) is to mix the crews up a little, fly with some different people to get a different perspective," she said. "And what better way to mix the crews up than by putting all the girls on the same crew?"

While the all-female crew did accomplish a unique milestone together, they point out that the significance of their mission success is that every crewmember achieved personal goals to get there.

"I encourage any girl or woman to do what she wants. Too often I hear people say they can't do something (but it is) because they don't realize they have the opportunity," Captain Mack said. "I would tell any person flying is an attainable goal for anyone who wants to work for it. As they say, you are only limited in what you can do by what you can dream."

Magazine Honors Six Hispanic-American Military Women

By Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Six Hispanic-American service women were honored in September for outstanding achievements in the military services and their status as role models during the 2nd annual Latina Style Symposium awards luncheon sponsored by Latina Style magazine and co-hosted by the Defense Department.

The two-day symposium featured roundtable and panel discussions about important issues concerning the more than 7 million Hispanic women in the U.S. work force, including the military and the Defense Department. This year, Latina Style showcased active-duty Hispanic women of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, and one woman representing the Army and Air National Guard.

As it did last year, DoD used the event as the kick-off for its celebration of Hispanic-American Heritage Month, Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.



Capt. Kathlene Contres, commandant of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, which is the Defense Department's center of excellence for equal opportunity and human relations training, is the Navy's highest-ranking Hispanic woman officer on active duty. She maintains a \$24 million compound, training more than 1,500 students annually, managing a 15,000-volume reference library of equal opportunity resources and managing the Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey used across all DoD agencies.



The Marine Corps' Latina Style plaque recipient is Col. Angela Salinas, the first woman combat service support monitor, the first woman recruiting station commanding officer and the first woman Marine Corps recruiting district commanding officer.

Salinas is the chief of staff for Marine Corps Recruiting Command. "Her leadership directly impacts and provides opportunities for America's Hispanic populace," according to her award citation.



The Army's winner is Lt. Col. Marcela G. Alvarado, the first in her family to graduate from college. Commissioned as a military intelligence officer in 1987, Alvarado has been a platoon leader, executive officer, company commander and a Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor, and has held various staff-level posts.

She recently served as the executive officer for the Army's assistant deputy chief of staff for intelligence, where she became a key member of the Abu Ghraib prison abuse investigation team.



Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Susan R. Ayala was honored for her service as superintendent and senior enlisted adviser for the Air Force Review Boards Agency. Ayala developed internal agency policies for the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records, the Secretary of the Air Force's Personnel Council and Air Force Civilian Appellate Review Office.

Called the "chief, who cares," Ayala climbed to the Air Force's top enlisted grade, and while doing so, she has served in numerous Air Force active-duty, Reserve and National Guard positions, officials said.



Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Priscilla Melendez was attending Army warrant officer school and was therefore unable to attend the ceremony. Her boss, Col. Jackie Reaves, commander of the Operational Support Airlift Agency, accepted the award on her behalf.

Melendez was cited for outstanding performance as the agency's senior human resources sergeant while supporting more than 240 Soldiers stationed throughout the United States, Germany, Kuwait and Afghanistan.

"She provides outstanding personnel services to the soldiers of her command, and she empowers and encourages all members of her team to assist and support each other regardless of their task at hand," the award citation read.



The Coast Guard awardee is Petty Officer 1st Class Isabel Paez, who serves on the diversity policy staff and is the ethnic policy adviser to the commandant. Her award citation states that she has been instrumental in the development of the Coast Guard's policy on the use of English and other languages in the workplace.

Paez is spearheading an effort to bring English immersion training to otherwise fully qualified entry-level service members at the Recruit Training Center. She also translates much of the Coast Guard's recruiting information to Spanish in an effort to provide accurate information on the service, its mission and entry requirements to the Spanish-speaking community.
(All photos supplied by US Department Of Defense)

“How times have changed”



US Navy Photo
By ENCM (SW) D.C. Nolan

In 19*! I joined the Navy from the great state of New York. It was a surprisingly disconcerting and humbling change from the civilian world. There were ships named SARATOGA, GLOVER, VULCAN, and the PENNSACOLA (I figured that I would show my age this way), even the battle ships of World War II were being re-commissioned, the USSR was still around, the military budgets were large and money was almost never an issue. The Navy was very different than today's Navy. Even the junior sailor is smarter and healthier today than way back then.

So I am nearing the last few years of my career and I was talking to a group of young sailors. (You know the type, the fresh young recruits and somewhat green third classes that make you look and feel like a grandfather). They were curious about how the Navy was when I was junior. I told them “first of all never ask a Master Chief about the past. You will be placed in a UA status by your command because of the length and complexity of the sea stories”.

They all laughed and snickered at that remark, but I new that the ice had been broken.

I started to make comparisons of the technology that was available them. For instance, the crews on my ships were very motivated to assemble a working party during an UNREP due to the fact that the mail was some where in all of that food, parts and materials used to sustain the ship. The crew wanted to here from home more than they wanted a holiday routine.

Today the electronic mail system or IT21 gives the crew almost real time contact with their family members. The ships still get mail; care packages, business mail, E-bay orders, and newspapers. But the letters three to four weeks old before you receive them has all but fallen by the wayside.

When collage level classes were available in my days aboard ship, the Navy deployed a civilian instructor or professor with the battle group but the classes were restricted to certain categories. Now inter-net capabilities give access to on line collage programs for the crew. They have access to educational studies from collages, institutions and the Naval Educational Training Command. Now you can get a degree and be forward deployed in a combat zone while eating ice cream. Plus you gat paid for all of this!!!! The inter-net also keeps the crew up to date with what is going on at home and abroad.

When I wanted to call home and check on the family, I either had to wait until the ship entered a port. Hopefully the port we entered had a USO so the phone bill for a ten-minute call did not break the bank account. Today I hardly know a sailor that does not own a cell phone.

Entertainment on the ship when I was new to the Navy was 3 hours of site TV when it worked, playing cards on the mess decks or in the shop, the occasional swim call, or reading a book from the ships library if your ship was lucky enough to have one. The one thing I always looked forward to was movie night on the mess deck. The reel-to-reel projector setup, the light turn off and the worst movie from Hollywood that the IC's could find would be played. Sometimes the movie would be so bad that the crew had more laughs making fun of the movie than watching it.

Today most ships can get satellite TV, CNN running 24/7 to get the up to date world news, video game machines and the ships crew brings on board personal computers and lap tops. The movies that are shown on site TV are first run movies sometimes they were shown to the crew before they make it to the theaters back home. Some still play cards on the mess decks but gone are the projectors and the reel-to-reel movies. It is amazing what you miss when times change.

The largest difference are the technologies that have been developed over the last 25 years in the fields of engineering, command and control systems, communications, fire fighting and human resources. These technologies are so advanced that the Navy has instituted higher educational standards for in coming personnel several times during my career. In the near future an E-8 will have to have a minimum of an Associates Degree to get advanced.

The Diversity Plan laid down by the previous Chief of Naval Operations is one of the most impressive and sweeping changes I have seen in a very long time. These are a series of programs that focus on the realignment, education, communication and the most important in my mind is the personal and professional development of the civilian work force and the sailor.

The Navy today is doing more experimental work with Diversity. Take the Sea Swap program. Basically it is taking a

ship, forward deploying it, assigning that ship two crews and rotating the crew for deployment instead of the ship.

The USS DECATUR, the only ship in our Navy that has Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs as division officers as part of a Division Officer Pilot Program.

The Navy even has (for the first time I might add) a Submariner as a Strike Group Commander.

Everything I have mentioned is utilized as tools to allow us to make a better more efficient Naval Force. From the Human Capital Strategies to Equal Opportunity and from the educational opportunities to technological advancements in the military, it is all considered Diversity. Putting the right people in the right place, with the right skills in their fields. Utilizing the experience of our sailors, encouraging thinking outside the box, and utilizing the genius of our people makes perfect sense.

I finished talking with group and asked if there are any questions. One sailor spoke up and said "it all sounds like a lot of work. What can I expect if I stay in long enough to make Master Chief and was there anything that has not changed during my career?"

My reply was: "I expect that you will do the same things I have done and the same thing my chiefs and officers did for me. Take care of the sailors, train them as best that you can, give them every opportunity to excel and ensure they do great things for their sailors. Consequently, it's the only thing I can think of that has not changed in my career."

This may sound corny but after the group broke up and I stood they're watching them walk away. I had a sudden feeling that they would do just fine in my Navy. I also felt envious of what they would face long after I retired. But as a prior commanding officer once told me "Master chief, you have done enough".

Frank Cable Sailors Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

By Journalist 1st Class Johnnie Hickmon, USS Frank Cable Public Affairs

APRA HEIGHTS, Guam (NNS) -- Sailors aboard USS Frank Cable (AS 40) celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month through a series of dances and native Hispanic foods Oct. 11 and 12.

During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. The observance was expanded in 1988 and is now celebrated from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.

Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

Frank Cable Sailors held events at both Polaris Point for their shipmates and at Commander William C. McCool Elementary School in Apra Heights for 6th – 8th grade students.

At Polaris Point, Sailors had the opportunity to watch traditional Hispanic dances and indulge in some Hispanic dishes, such as tamales and rice. During the event at the school, the Hispanic Heritage Committee demonstrated traditional Hispanic

dances, such as Mariachi, salsa and Bachata, while explaining their origins.

The school children clapped their hands and nodded their heads, as the music played and the dancers danced.

Ship's Serviceman Seaman Rogelio Trevino, who sang "Te pareces tanto a mi," said the children seemed to genuinely enjoy the performance.

"The students were very supportive," he said. "We thank them for their attendance."

"It was a great way to introduce the Latin culture to the children," said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (SW) Jose Aguilar, who danced to the tune of "Te Veo Venir Soledad."

"The best part was that a lot of the kids knew the singers of the songs to which we were dancing," said Machinist's Mate Fireman Monica Angulo, who along with Hull Maintenance Technician Fireman Michael Ramirez danced to the Jennifer Lopez and Mark Anthony song "No Me Ames."

After the performance, the children showed their appreciation by offering a rousing round of applause for the show.

"I like the Salsa dancing," said 6th grader Raven Collins. "I want to learn a lot more about the [Spanish] heritage."

Sixth grader Dakota Clifford said the closing dance number by Trevino and Ship's Serviceman Seaman Rosa Parra, who danced the Merengue to the Selena song "Como Una Flor," was her favorite part of the performance.

"The performance was exciting and the song was pretty good, too."

The school's principal, Stan Chop, said he was thankful to the Frank Cable Sailors for coming to the school and performing.

"It was pretty exciting," he said. "It energized everyone for the morning and provided them a great opportunity to learn the Spanish culture."

Business Leaders See Ship With Unique Military, Civilian Crew



US Navy Photo

By Sgt. Sara Wood, American Forces Press Service

ABOARD USS MOUNT WHITNEY (NNS) -- Business leaders participating in the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference Oct. 21 got to visit a one-of-a-kind Navy ship and sail off the coast of Naples, Italy.

USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC 20), the flagship for the U.S.

6th Fleet, is the only Navy ship with a hybrid crew of civilian and military personnel. About 60 percent of the crew are Navy personnel, and 40 percent are civilian mariners from the Military Sealift Command.

Mount Whitney is being used as a test platform for the hybrid crew model, said Capt. Tadd Wheeler, commanding officer of Mount Whitney. So far, he said, the results have been very satisfactory.

"We all work together very hard in the team effort that any other crew on a Navy ship does," Wheeler said.

Mount Whitney began merging its crew in August 2004 and deployed here in January 2005, Wheeler said. There have been very few challenges in merging the military and civilian work force, he said, probably due to leadership on all levels putting extra effort in to make sure the transition was smooth.

The conference participants who visited the ship said they were impressed by the crew - military and civilian alike.

"It's very well-managed," said Thomas Manders, director of MarketSphere Consulting, in Dallas. "Folks are well-trained. They have all of the assets they need to do their jobs properly and to provide the measure of security that we're looking for."

Manders noted that not just the crew was changing, but also the technology, making the workings of the ship more efficient and less labor-intensive.

"Obviously, the technology's allowed us to be much more effective," he said.

The civilian mariners who work on Mount Whitney have to go through training and meet the same standards as the Coast Guard, Wheeler said. They are very competent, he said. The only difference between them and the Sailors is the average age. While the Sailors average in the low 20s, the civilians' median age is 49, and there are crew members as old as 79.

The conference participants were given a full day of activities, including a demonstration of a maritime interdiction operation, a tour of the ship, lunch with Sailors, and static displays of equipment. For some of the participants, just being around Navy people lifted their spirits.

"When I got off the plane and saw those guys, it felt like home," said Elena Salsitz, chief of protocol for the city of San Diego, who said that she's used to being in a Navy town.

Wheeler said the visit by the civilian professionals was much appreciated, because the ship is forward deployed and it's easy for the Sailors to feel isolated.

"Sometimes 'out of sight, out of mind' can affect production, maybe morale," he said. "It's a great opportunity when you have this class of individuals from the United States come out and visit. As you look around, you can see that the Sailors are 'all-hands-on-deck,' having a good time either just chatting about things or trying to catch up on what's going on back home."

The goal for the visit was for the civilians to understand the ship's mission and to see a representation of the whole Navy, Wheeler said. Manders said that goal was achieved.

"We got to meet folks at all levels of the Navy - from admiral on down, as well as the civilian staff," he said. "We got a chance to really understand what they do."

Meeting the Challenge of a New Era; CNO Releases 2006 Guidance



US Navy Photo

From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Mullen released his 2006 Guidance for the Navy Oct. 14.

Mullen's guidance outlines his top three priorities, his specific objectives to address those priorities, and what he expects from each Sailor to achieve his vision.

He noted that we all live in a new era, which is "plagued by uncertainty and change and unrestricted warfare, an era of shifting global threats and challenging new opportunities," he said.

Underpinning his guidance - which is rooted in the framework of Sea Power 21 - are his top three priorities; sustained combat readiness, building a fleet for the future and developing 21st Century leaders.

Mullen said that of all the challenges the Navy faces, building the future fleet is the biggest. Specifically, he pointed out that the 2006 budget currently in Congress calls for only four ships, and he is not "anxious to stay there."

He addressed this and his other two priorities by outlining seven specific objectives ranging from continuing support in the war on terrorism to determining the proper size of the future fleet to continuing executing Sea Warrior and other ongoing manpower and personnel transformational efforts that will help the Navy achieve his "top three."

The guidance includes 10 "Guiding Principles" - warfighting, people, teamwork, jointness, leadership, accountability and integrity, alignment, risk management, commitment to change and effects-based thinking - that he says must "guide and inform our actions every day."

"Our success in defense of this nation depends upon the men and women of the United States Navy - active, reserve and civilian, and their families," Mullen wrote. "Personal and family readiness are vital to combat readiness." He also pointed out that he doesn't talk about people without talking about diversity, another main focus for Mullen since he assumed duties as CNO in June.

"I believe we have to have people from and for every part of our Navy, and we've done well, but we can do better in my view."

CNO also stressed the importance of naval teamwork and joint operations. He called the Navy/Marine Corps team a "national treasure," but added that while naval forces bring to the fight

unique maritime and expeditionary prowess, they are "only as good as the contribution we make to the overall effort."

Of all of Mullen's guiding principles, leadership at every level remained a central theme. "Everything starts and ends with leadership," CNO wrote. "Nothing else we accomplish, no other priority we pursue, is of much consequence if we do not have sound and effective leadership in place to enact it."

And that leadership is essential to his principles of alignment and change. He wrote that the alignment of any organization is simply the degree to which its resources, processes and communications support its vision and mission. "Every Sailor in the Navy should share an understanding of our vision and mission," he wrote, "and be able to describe how he or she contributes to them."

As he frequently tells Sailors in the fleet, Mullen wrote that the only constant in the Navy's future is change. Success in today's uncertain security environment demands that "we continue to transform the way we think, operate and fight," he explained.

In summing up his 2006 Guidance, Mullen said the Navy is in great shape, readiness is high and maintenance is getting done faster and more efficiently than ever before. "But," he added, "we cannot meet the challenges of this new era simply by sustaining today's readiness and requirements. Our adversaries will not rest; our friends and allies cannot wait."

He said that building upon Sea Power 21, the Navy must continue to transform, recapitalize and modernize. "The Navy will begin to build today a force that is properly sized, balanced and priced for tomorrow."

Mullen wrote that it is impossible to foresee, or to fully comprehend, all the challenges the Navy will face. "But by building a balanced force that is resilient and adaptable, with the depth of capabilities required to meet the demands of a multimission, multitask environment, we can mitigate against this uncertainty.

"I am proud to face these challenges with you, and look forward to our shared success."

If you would like to submit photos, articles, interviews, or feedback E-mail Darrell.Nolan@navy.mil with your submissions.

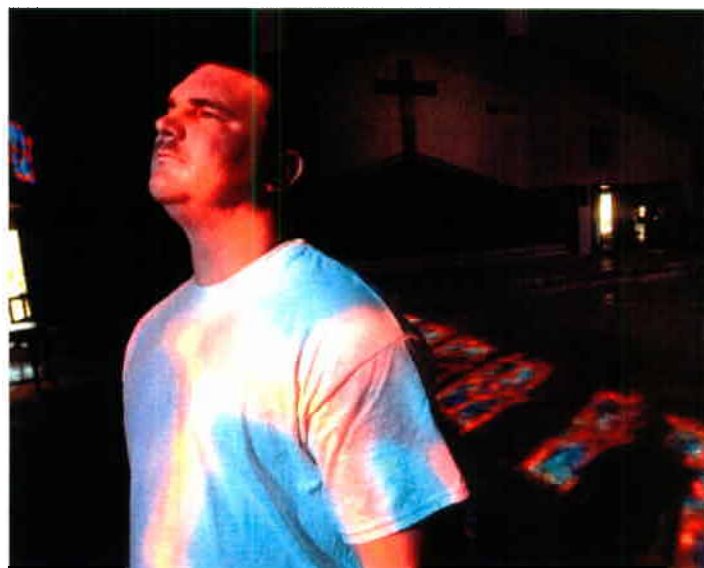
To visit past issues of the Diversity Newsletters, go the Navy Knowledge Online website under personnel development at www.nko.navy.mil

To visit the Reflections Magazine from the Department of Equal Opportunity Management Institute, use the hyperlink below.
[Reflections: Spring/summer 2005](#)

You can get the current issue of the Diversity Newsletter At Naval Personnel Command Website with the link below.

<http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity/>

Image of the Month



US Navy Photo

(Oct. 20, 2005) – U.S. Navy Airman Eric Labrecque, assigned to the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), enters a church in Slidelle, La., during cleanup efforts. Sailors assigned to Stennis have volunteered to join with the Stennis Space Center near Biloxi, Miss., to provide relief work along the battered Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Jon Hyde